

THE  
DRAMATIC CENSOR;  
OR,  
MONTHLY EPITOME  
OF  
Taste, Fashion, and Manners.

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No. XXXII.  
FOR DECEMBER, 1800.

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“ SCHEDONI's wonted constancy forsook him. Inured as he was  
“ to guilt; steeled against compunction, and deadened to the sense of  
“ virtuous shame; this sudden exposure of his atrocity overwhelmed him  
“ with confusion. For a few moments he writhed under the agony of  
“ conviction—but the interval was short. He recollected, by a violent  
“ struggle, his scattered spirits—his hollow eyes rolled ghastly in his  
“ head—his haggard features assumed a cast still more fiend-like and  
“ diabolical!—and scowling stood SCHEDONI, like the Evil Genius of  
“ the place! contemplating the desolation himself had made!”

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COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY, Oct. 30, 1800.  
INKLE AND YARICO—*Colman*. THE MISER—*H. Fielding*.

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DRURY-LANE, FRIDAY, Oct. 31, 1800.  
CASTLE SPECTRE—*M. G. Lewis*. ACTÆON AND DIANA—  
*Byrne*. MY GRANDMOTHER—*P. Hoare*.

COVENT-GARDEN, FRIDAY, Oct. 31, 1800.

KING RICHARD THE THIRD—*Shakspeare*. THE MAID  
OF THE MILL—*Bickerstaffe*.

The performances of this evening are rendered memorable in the annals of the Metropolitan Stage, by the *début* of Mr. Cooke; a gentleman who, for several years, has acquired a superior degree of celebrity in the provincial theatres, but more particularly in the capital of the Sister Kingdom, where he has long been regarded as the hero of the drama. The almost unprecedented *éclat* which attended this gentleman's introduction on the Covent-Garden boards, as well as the increasing reputation he has obtained, by every repeated performance, fully warrant us in making his style of acting the subject of distinct and separate discussion. It is our intention, therefore, to take a retrospective view of Mr. Cooke's merits *in the aggregate*, and to conclude our *Theatrical Report*, in the present Number, with an *Analysis* of the several different characters he has sustained. Of course, we wave anticipation, and shall content ourselves, in our regular and *diurnal* review, with merely mentioning the parts he successively represented.

With the exception of Mr. Murray's *Henry VI.* Mr. Pope's *Richmond*, and Mr. Whitfield's *Buckingham*, the rest of the *Dramatis Personæ* were but very indifferently cast. Waddy, who personated the *Lieutenant of the Tower*, is certainly little *encumbered* with professional excellence. Claremont, Betterton, Atkins, Seaton, *et hoc genus omne*, serve to eke out the account; safe in the envelopement of obscurity, they may plead their own native insignificance in support of their right to critical immunity. It is, however, but justice to observe, that Mrs. Litchfield, as *Lady Anne*, is entitled to  
more



more than *negative* commendation. Her performances, of late, evince her to be possessed of powers above the level of mediocrity.

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DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, Nov. 1, 1800.

THE STRANGER—*Kotzebue*. THE OLD MAID—  
*A. Murphy*.

The part of *Tobias* by Mr. Dowton—his first appearance in that character.

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COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, Nov. 1, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds*. THE POOR SOLDIER—*O'Keeffe*.

A new comedy, under the expressive title of *Life*, from the prolific pen of Mr. Reynolds, was performed this evening, for the first time, and received with greater applause than it can lay legitimate claim to. Like the generality of this gentleman's productions, it aims less at consistency of plot, and just delineation of character, than at whimsicality, and the fleeting topics of fashionable notoriety. We shall not now enter into the abstract question, in how far a writer is justified in turning the false bias of public taste to his own immediate advantage (most probably many of our most successful playwrights would be utterly incompetent to the production of a theatrical piece, if the palate of the town were less vitiated and debauched); but proceed to analyse Mr. Reynold's comedy, on the broad principle of a play written avowedly to humour and still further debauch that depraved appetite, by the gratification of which they live, move, and have their being.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Sir Harry Torpid</i>	Mr. Lewis,
<i>Marchmont</i>	Mr. Murray,
<i>Primitive</i>	Mr. Munden,
<i>Gabriel Lackbrain</i>	Mr. Fawcett,
<i>Crafty</i>	Mr. Emery,
<i>Clifford</i>	Mr. Farley;
<i>Rosa Marchmont</i>	Miss Murray,
<i>Mrs. Decoy</i>	Mrs. St. Ledger,
<i>Mrs. Belford</i>	Miss Chapman.

The scene of action is laid at a fashionable watering-place, as the spot most likely to attract and bring together a numerous groupe of varied and discordant characters. *Mr. Marchmont*, a distressed author, in hopes of retrieving his pecuniary embarrassments, composes a Treatise against Monopoly, which he offers to *Crafty*, the proprietor of a circulating library. *Crafty* treats his application with scorn; and advises him, instead of writing a pamphlet against extortion, to pen a panegyric on *raffling*. This proposal *Marchmont* rejects with equal disdain, on his part, and thereby incurs the resentment of *Crafty*, who proceeds to arrest *Marchmont* for rent and various sums of money due on loan to his ward and nephew, *Gabriel Lackbrain*.

*Sir Harry Torpid*, a wild eccentric baronet, whose sole aim is to *kill time*, by travelling post from place to place, happens to fall in company with *Marchmont's* daughter, *Rosa*, for whom he instantly conceives a most violent passion. From some hints which escape her, he learns the embarrassed state of her father's circumstances; and, wishing to relieve *Marchmont*, without wounding his daughter's delicacy, contrives



trives to drop his pocket-book, containing bank-notes to a considerable amount, as it were by accident, in *Rosa's* path. *Rosa* finds the pocket-book, and conjecturing it to belong to *Sir Harry*, resolves to seek an opportunity of returning it to its rightful owner.

At this critical juncture, *Marchmont* rushes upon the stage, in a state bordering on distraction, having narrowly escaped the clutches of the bailiffs commissioned by *Crafty* to arrest him. A scene of high-wrought sensibility now ensues. *Rosa* sees her father on the very verge of ruin—she holds in her hands the means of his deliverance—the bank-notes she has found are more than adequate to satisfy the claims against her father—but then they are the property of another—her conscience smites her, and begets a long and painful struggle between the innate sense of duty and of right, and the agonized emotions of filial affection. At length, after a pathetic appeal to Heaven, she is fortified in her virtuous resolution not to swerve from the strict line of duty—nor to purchase even her parent's release by a base and dishonourable action. Her father applauds her determination; and, *Sir Harry* making his appearance, *Marchmont* compels him to take back his pocket-book.

A variety of circumstances now conspire to unfold the knavish character of *Crafty*. It appears that he has other motives for arresting *Marchmont*, than the mere recovery of the money due to his nephew *Lackbrain*. Nay, he even offers to forego all his claims on *Marchmont*, provided that gentleman will consent to leave England, and reside abroad—a proposal, however, in which *Marchmont* refuses to acquiesce. *Crafty* is induced, it seems, to this offer in consequence of a letter from a wealthy relation, *Paul Primitive*, apprizing him of his intention to return to England, and commissioning him to select a wife for *Gabriel Lackbrain*,

on

on whom *Primitive* designs to settle the the bulk of his fortune.

This commission opens a new field of action for the over-reaching genius of *Crafty*, in the event of which; however, his fraud and treachery recoil upon himself. He enters into a matrimonial negotiation with *Mrs. Decoy*, a female fortune-hunter, who plumes herself upon her relationship to *Sir Harry Torpid*, and whom *Crafty* therefore fixes upon as a proper match for his nephew *Gabriel*, having previously bargained with the lady to receive a large sum of money; whenever *Gabriel* succeeds to *Primitive's* fortune. The marriage takes place without delay, and *Crafty* furnishes the house in the first style of elegance; issuing the necessary orders to the different tradespeople in his own name, with a view of enhancing his credit and consequence among his neighbours.

Meanwhile *Marchmont*, finding all appeals to *Crafty's* forbearance ineffectual, resolves, as his last hope, to throw himself upon the mercy of *Lackbrain*. For this purpose he repairs with his daughter to *Lackbrain's* house, and is announced at the very moment, that *Sir Harry Torpid* has disclosed to *Lackbrain*, the real character of his hopeful bride. This discovery greatly incenses *Lackbrain* against his guardian, and renders him the more disposed to comply with *Sir Harry's* request, who urges him to give *Marchmont* a general release. *Sir Harry* very adroitly plies him with bumpers of wine, which produce the desired effect; by spiriting up *Lackbrain* to resist the authority of his imperious guardian.

*Crafty* interposes, commands, and even menaces, but in vain. His nephew formally discharges *Marchmont* from all pecuniary obligations. A servant now enters to apprize *Crafty*, that the tradespeople, who furnished his nephew's house,



house, having discovered that *Mrs. Decoy* was a mere fortune-hunter, insisted upon immediate payment. This is welcome intelligence to *Crafty*, who hopes to convert it into the means of gratifying his revenge, and calls upon his nephew to discharge the debt. But here he is completely outwitted; for the furniture having been ordered in *his own name*, he is given to understand, that the tradespeople look to *him*, and *him only*, for payment.

Our attention is now called off from *Crafty*, and his nefarious schemes, to the other personages of the drama. *Marchmont*, anxious to secure his daughter from contingent want, in the event of his own demise, by qualifying her for a genteel situation in life, advertizes for a person to instruct her in music. *Mrs. Belford*, offers herself, and in an interview with *Rosa*, requests the latter to give her a specimen of the progress she has already made in the art. *Rosa* sings a plaintive air, which appears to excite great interest and sympathy in *Mrs. Belford's* breast. "The words of that song (she tells *Rosa*) were written by your own mother." Indescribable is the effect which this speech produces upon *Rosa*. Hitherto she has been kept in utter ignorance, respecting her mother's destiny; nay, her father had even laid the strictest injunctions upon her, never to introduce the subject. But now her whole soul is on the stretch, it is not in her power longer to resist the eager desire she feels, to learn tidings of her mother. She proceeds to enquiries, when the conversation is interrupted by the entrance of her father, accompanied by *Mr. Clifford*.

The latter, who has sinister and dishonourable views on *Mrs. Belford*, forms a project of getting her into his power, by representing her to *Marchmont*, as a person of infamous character, who is employed to seduce his daughter. Thus prepossessed

prepossessed against her, *Marchmont* commands her to leave the house, loading her at the same time with upbraidings for her supposed treachery. Conscious of her own innocence, *Mrs. Belford* refuses to exculpate herself from a charge, which, though it cannot overwhelm her with shame, wounds her inmost feelings. She is scarcely able to support herself under the conflict of contending passions which agonize her soul, and *Clifford* avails himself of her distress, to bear her off to his lodgings.

Very fortunately for the lady, it happens that *Primitive* is arrived, and being guardian to *Mr. Clifford*, makes no scruple of occupying his apartments in the hotel. Seeing *Clifford* approach, accompanied by a female, curiosity impels him to conceal himself in the recess of the room, and thus he becomes acquainted with the extent of *Clifford's* villainy, who designs to sail the next morning with his victim for Lisbon, and to procure remittances from his guardian, by imposing on him an artful tale, that his voyage was prescribed by his physician for the benefit of his health. *Primitive* reveals himself; defeats *Clifford's* dishonourable schemes, and takes the lady under his own immediate protection.

*Primitive* now repairs, with his fair charge, to his nephew's residence. Here a general meeting of the family takes place. *Lackbrain* and his new wife, whose manners are diametrically opposite to *Primitive's* wishes and ideas, impose themselves upon him as lovers of retirement and simplicity. Full of romantic notions of *Arcadian* felicity, *Primitive* is easily beguiled. He mistakes the flush of intoxication, for the rosy hue of health; the practised demirep, for a true domestic wife, and a pattern of conjugal fidelity. So completely is he the dupe of their artifice, that he suffers  
his



his mind to be poisoned against his *protégée*; and as *Mrs. Belford* is restricted by motives of delicacy and prudence from vindicating her character, he reluctantly enjoins her departure from the house, lest her presence should contaminate so pure and immaculate an abode.

The moment of detection, however, is now arrived: *Mrs. Belford* withdraws to another room, to collect some drawings and manuscripts which she had deposited there. In the interim a tumultuous noise announces scenes not perfectly congenial with those visions of *Arcadian* retirement and unsophisticated simplicity of manners, which *Primitive* fondly hoped to see realized. Curious to know the cause of this tumult, he retreats into an antichamber, whence he has an opportunity of seeing and hearing every thing that passes. He soon learns how egregiously he has been imposed upon: learns that his hopeful nephew, *Gabriel Lackbrain*, the true unsophisticated child of nature, as he thought him, is an incorrigible sot!—that the *immaculate Mrs. Lackbrain*, that “*pattern of conjugal fidelity*,” is a \* *hacknied demirep*,

\* On the first night of representation, this disclosure was effected by a scene truly ludicrous and comic. *Sir Harry*, in consequence of an assignation from *Gabriel's* wife, the late *Mrs. Decoy*, repaired to that lady's dressing-room, when understanding that *Gabriel* had received intelligence of their amour, and was coming *full cry* to seek revenge, he equipped himself in female attire, and personated *Sally Sassajras*, a kind and willing nymph, with whom *Gabriel* carries on a secret correspondence. Under this disguise he was overwhelmed by the intoxicated lover with compliments and caresses, till the abrupt entrance of *Primitive* brought on a general explanation, little to the satisfaction of *Gabriel* and his fashionable wife. This incident, in deference to the squeamishness of a few prudes, was omitted on the second representation, and *Primitive* makes a discovery of his nephew's unworthiness, by overhearing a discourse between *Mr. and Mrs. Lackbrain*, in which they mutually laugh their credulous benefactor to scorn.

engaged in an intrigue with *Sir Harry*;—and further, he obtains a convincing proof of *Mrs. Belford's* innocence and virtue. *Primitive* bursts from his concealment, and again takes *Mrs. Belford* under his protection.

All that now remains is to expose the villainy of *Crafty*. This is accomplished by means of a pretended wager between *Primitive* and *Sir Harry*; the question at issue being, that *Crafty* makes greater gains by *raffling*, than by *bookselling*. *Primitive* takes the *affirmative*, and *Sir Harry* the *negative* of the proposition. *Crafty* is appealed to, as the umpire, and decides the bet in favour of *Primitive*, by detailing the various frauds and tricks practised in this iniquitous system of gambling. *Primitive* thanks him for his candour, and, in return, informs him, that the wager was a mere stratagem, to detect his real character; adding, that as he does not mean to be *raffled out of his estate*, he shall not apply to him for a steward, but appoint *Marchmont* to that office.

For this prosperous reverse of fortune, *Marchmont* is principally indebted to the solicitations of *Mrs. Belford*, who, by way of requital, intreats the favour of *Marchmont* to give his opinion of a novel which she has sketched out. In this view *Mrs. Belford* waits in person upon *Marchmont* with the manuscript, which bears the title of *Henry and Eliza*. The striking coincidence between the events recorded in this narrative, and his own history, arrests his most eager attention; but that attention soon assumes a stronger degree of interest, when, in the description of *Henry*, he recognizes his own character, and in that of *Eliza*, his injured wife! Overcome with the violence of his emotions, he is unable to conclude the narrative. *Rosa*, therefore, takes the manuscript, which she proceeds to read aloud. It appears that *Eliza* married *Henry* against the approbation of her friends; that they passed several years happily together, though



though under reduced circumstances, till *Henry* at last gave into dissipation, which involved them in ruin; then he deserted and abandoned his wife, who saw herself under the necessity of going abroad in a menial capacity, and on her return to England, after a long absence, was cruelly spurned by her husband, on her applying for the place of a musical instructress to her own child. This last circumstance strikes like a thunderbolt to *Marchmont's* heart, and at once explains the mystery of this portentous narrative. In *Mrs. Belford*, *Marchmont* discovers his injured wife! *Rosa*, her long-lost mother! A reconciliation succeeds, which is rendered still more complete by the appearance of *Primitive*, who, in the person of *Mrs. Belford*, now recognizes his neglected daughter, whom he disinherited in consequence of her marriage with *Marchmont*. Sir *Harry* joins the party, and is made happy with *Rosa's* hand:--- and the play concludes with mutual forgiveness, joy, and felicity.

As to the general character of this drama, we have already remarked that it does not come under the description of genuine and legitimate comedy. It possesses the usual *characteristics* of Mr. Reynolds's Muse, and amuses rather by a certain quaintness of manner, occasional sallies of humour, and the happy knack of introducing temporary topics of fashionable notoriety, than by unity of design, regularity of plan, and just delineation. In some particular instances, indeed, the author has displayed a vein of true and sterling wit. The scene in which *Crafty* becomes the dupe of his own art, and incurs the payment of the furniture, which he had pompously ordered in *his own name*, abounds in comic force. The same praise is due to the *raffling* scene, which contains some very just and spirited satire on the fashionable propensity for gaming. But, *as a whole*, the drama is very defective. The several characters drop down, as it were, from the moon, and

though many of them perfect strangers to each other, and, from the diversity of their habits and rank in life, not calculated to be upon a footing of intimacy, act and associate together with all the familiarity and freedom of a long acquaintance. The reduced and indigent *Mr. Marchmont* is on very confidential terms with the gay and dissipated *Mr. Clifford*. *Sir Harry* is the *spaniel* of the whole party, and though represented as burning with such a sudden and violent passion for *Rosa*, that he has not a thought to bestow on any other subject, immediately engages in an intrigue with *Mrs. Lackbrain*. *Marchmont* has so slight a recollection of his wife, that the mere intervention of a veil is sufficient to prevent him from recognizing her—nor does *Primitive* discover his daughter in the person of *Mrs. Belford*, till she is previously known as *Marchmont's* wife. In brief, the new comedy of *Life* is a play which, whilst the present rage for *caricature* continues, may please the multitude in the representation; but which will not afford much rational gratification to readers of taste in the closet.

To the exertions of the performers the author is eminently indebted. Mr. Lewis, by that sprightliness of manner—almost exclusively his own—which forms the distinguishing *trait* in his acting, renders the wild eccentric character of *Sir Harry* highly interesting and amusing. Mr. Munden possesses a rich vein of humour, which he displayed to conspicuous advantage in the personation of *Primitive*. Fawcett's *Gabriel Lackbrain* is well seasoned with broad farce, and, as such, irresistibly ludicrous. *Crafty* meets with a very able representative in the person of Mr. Emery, whose humour is of that dry and caustic nature befitting the part. Mr. Murray infuses dignity and *pathos* into the character of *Marchmont*, and strongly agitates the feelings. Mr. Farley, as *Clifford*, sustains but a very indifferent part.

In



In scenes which require simplicity and unsophisticated nature—a walk, perhaps, as arduous as any in the whole range of dramatic representation—Miss Murray stands without a rival. Her delineation of *Rosa* was exquisitely interesting. Mrs. St. Ledger boasts a genteel figure, and is, in other respects, well calculated for gay and lively characters: this she amply demonstrated by her personation of *Mrs. Decay*. Miss Chapman's general style of acting partakes too much of stiffness and formality; but, in other respects, she sustained the part of *Mrs. Belford* with credit.

Mr. Whitfield delivered the *Prologue*, which is little more than a *captatio benevolentia* in favour of the author. The *Epilogue* contains some humorous points, chiefly directed against the fashionable absurdities of the day, and was given, with appropriate jocoseness, by Mr. Munden. It comes, we understand, from the pen of Mr. Andrews.

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### DRURY-LANE, MONDAY, November 3, 1800.

PIZARRO—*R. B. Sheridan*, THE PURSE, OR BENEVOLENT TAR—*H. Cross*.

Miss Stephens supported the character of *Sally*, in the Entertainment, for the first time, as the substitute for Mrs. Bland, whose continued malady, we are sorry to add, leaves little hope of her return to the stage.

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### COVENT-GARDEN, MONDAY, Nov. 3, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds*. OSCAR AND MALVINA—*Byrne*.

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### DRURY-LANE, TUESDAY, Nov. 4, 1800.

THE BROTHERS—*R. Cumberland*. ACTÆON AND DIANA—*Byrne*. THE DEAF LOVER—*F. Pilon*.

Without

Without the remotest design to depreciate from the merits of this comedy, which was originally produced at Covent-Garden in 1769, we cannot congratulate the Drury-Lane Manager on the success of his *revivals*. Mr. Kemble does not appear to be duly aware of the total revolution which the dramatic taste of the town has undergone within the last twenty years; he does not appear to observe, as a Manager ought to do, the "*Signs of the Times*." That regular development of plot, in which the several incidents spring naturally out of each other—that just delineation of character, which is to be found in the productions of our legitimate dramatists (in which class we certainly do not rank Messrs. R\*\*\*, D\*\*\*, and M\*\*\*)—that neatness of dialogue and genuine humour, which distinguish the writings of our *classic bards*, have now given way to *caricature, pun, wiredrawn sentiment, and extravaganza*. Thus circumstanced, it is not to be wondered at, that a comedy, like the *Brothers*, too good to suit the present debauched palate of the town, should meet with little encouragement. Indeed, a very moderate share of good sense and discernment might have enabled a Manager to foresee that little profit would result to the theatre from its reproduction. It was performed to barren benches in the *pit*, deserted *galleries*, and "a beggarly account of empty *boxes*," occupied by a few *stragglers*, on the strength of *orders*, which were dealt out this evening with a liberal and unsparing hand.

With respect to the performance itself, the play, upon the whole, was not *ill-cast*. Mr. King's *Sir Benjamin*, and Miss Pope's *Lady Dove* were admirably sustained. Bannister gave a very spirited delineation of *Captain Ironsides*; and Mr. Dowton's *Skiff* was highly characteristic. Of Miss Biggs's *Violetta* we cannot report so favourably. Seldom  
have



have we witnessed her more stiff and inanimate in her *manner*; nor can we describe the dress she wore by any epithet so just and appropriate, as that of *dowdy*, if we may be pardoned the use of so low and colloquial a term. *Sophia* and *Lucy Waters* were ably represented by Mrs. Mountain, and Miss Mellon.

The *scenic* department was conducted with a degree of slovenliness and inattention, which cannot be too severely reprobated. In the standing scene, if we may be allowed the phrase, in allusion to its frequent recurrence, which presents us with a view of the sea, and the wreck of a ship; the ocean, instead of exhibiting the appearance of a tempest, was perfectly calm; not a wave moved, the wreck was uniformly stationary: in short, the *tout ensemble* evinced a most culpable remissness, on the part of those whose business it is to see that propriety and scenic illusion are properly consulted. Subordinate agents are, doubtless, employed in this department; but the deed of the *agent* involves, by natural inference, the *principal*: the *censure*, therefore, as well as the *praise*, must in these instances attach to the Manager.

In compliance with the request of an old and valuable correspondent, we subjoin a *cast* of the parts:

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Sir Benjamin Dove</i>	.	.	.	Mr. King,
<i>Belfield, Sen.</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Barrymore,
<i>Belfield, Jun.</i>	.	.	.	Mr. C. Kemble,
<i>Captain Ironsides</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Bannister,
<i>Skiff</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Dowton,
<i>Paterson</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Holland,
<i>Old Goodwin</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Powell,
<i>Philip</i>	.	.	.	Mr. De Camp,
<i>Francis</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Trueman,
<i>Jonathan</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Wathen;

*Lady*

<i>Lady Dove</i>	.	.	.	.	Miss Pope,
<i>Violetta</i>	.	.	.	.	Miss Biggs,
<i>Sophia</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Mountain,
<i>Fanny Goodwin</i>	.	.	.	.	Miss B. Menage,
<i>Lucy Waters</i>	.	.	.	.	Miss Mellon,
<i>Kitty</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Chippendale.

COVENT-GARDEN, TUESDAY, Nov. 4, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds*. THE PADLOCK—*Bickerstaffe*.

It may justly be ranked among the *fatalities* of musical pieces, that they are equally exposed to *adventitious censure*, and to *adventitious applause*. So seldom does it happen, that musical talent is associated with theatrical ability, that a performer who unites the qualifications of an *actor* with those of a *singer*, is considered as a “*Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno*.” Mr. Hill’s *Leander*, and Miss Howell’s *Leonora*, were totally destitute of dramatic force. In point of *musical* execution, they might, peradventure, be entitled to some small portion of commendation; but as *actors*, they were insufferably tame and inanimate. Mr. Blanchard’s *Mungo* was, likewise, by no means satisfactory.

DRURY-LANE, WEDNESDAY, Nov. 5, 1800.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE—*Shakspeare*. ACTÆON  
AND DIANA—*Byrne*. THE HUMOURIST—*Cobb*.

COVENT-GARDEN, WEDNESDAY, Nov. 5, 1800.

KING RICHARD THE THIRD—*Shakspeare*. OSCAR AND  
MALVINA—*Byrne*.

DRURY-



## DRURY-LANE, THURSDAY, Nov. 6, 1800.

PIZARRO—*R. B. Sheridan.* THE VIRGIN UNMASKED—  
*H. Fielding.*

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## COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY, Nov. 6, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—*Cobb.*

In consequence of Mr. Incledon's indisposition, Mr. Hill sustained the part of *Paul*, in the entertainment, for the first time, and with no mean ability, though he cannot be placed upon a *par* with the original representative. The audience received him with the candour and indulgence due to the circumstances under which he came forward, and which, indeed, reflects honour upon the British character.

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## DRURY-LANE, FRIDAY, Nov. 7, 1800.

A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE—*Mrs. Centlivre.*

ACTÆON AND DIANA—*Byrne.* ALL THE

WORLD'S A STAGE—*Jackman.*

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## COVENT-GARDEN, FRIDAY, Nov. 7, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds.* OSCAR AND MALVINA—*Byrne.*

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## DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, Nov. 8, 1800.

THE GAMESTER—*E. Moore.* ACTÆON AND DIANA—

*Byrne.* THE COZENERS—*S. Foote.*

This evening furnished another instance of the Manager's want of discernment with respect to *Revivals*. The *Cozeners*, cut down from a *three* to a *two*-act piece, and stripped of its most prominent features, was brought forward, to ex-

perience that coldness and neglect, which ever must attach to compositions of a *temporary* and *local* nature. In its *original* state, and on its *first* production, this comedy possessed strong interest from the notoriety of the parties, who were made to smart under the author's lash. But in the present day, the persons and transactions, which furnish the groundwork of this satire, are forgotten and unknown; the interest of the piece, of course, falls to the ground with the publicity of the characters which it attacks.

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COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, Nov. 8, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—*Cobb.*

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DRURY-LANE, MONDAY, Nov. 10, 1800.

PIZARRO—*R. B. Sheridan.* THE MOCK-DOCTOR—*H. Fielding.*

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COVENT-GARDEN, MONDAY, Nov. 10, 1800.

MERCHANT OF VENICE—*Shakspeare.* OSCAR AND MALVINA—*Byrne.*

For an account of Mr. Cooke's performance, in the part of *Shylock*, we beg leave to refer our readers to the *analysts* or general retrospect of that gentleman's acting, which accompanies the present Number. Miss Murray appeared as the representative of *Portia*, which character she sustained with extraordinary ability. Some critics, indeed, who accommodate their judgment to the prevailing bias of public opinion, affect to carp at her *youth*, and draw an invidious comparison between her and Mrs. Siddons. But, with all deference to the talents of the latter, we must take the liberty of observing that *Portia* is not a *matron* character;



character; nor have we any hesitation to add, that Mrs. Siddons, in this respect, errs considerably in her conception and delineation of the part. The town has been so long accustomed to the *manner* of this actress, that *prejudice* usurps the place of *reason*, and applause is indiscriminately the order of the day. But let it be remembered, that *Portia* is a *young and blooming damsel! a virgin bride!* and, therefore, ought not, in the representation, to assume the cast of a *matron*. The text itself, indeed, bears evidence to the justice of our remark; for *Shylock*, in his commendation of her judgment and ability, expressly observes,

“How much *more elder* art thou than thy *looks!*”

Mr. Murray personated *Antonio*, for the first time. Mr. Hill was the representative of *Lorenzo*; and Miss Dixon sustained the part of *Jessica*. The rest of the characters retained their accustomed cast.

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### DRURY-LANE, TUESDAY, Nov. 11, 1800.

THE BROTHERS—*R. Cumberland*. ROBINSON CRUSOE—*Byrne*. A QUARTER OF AN HOUR BEFORE DINNER—*Colman*.

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### COVENT-GARDEN, TUESDAY, Nov. 11, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds*. DESERTER OF NAPLES. THE MOUTH OF THE NILE—*F. Dibdin*.

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### DRURY-LANE, WEDNESDAY, Nov. 12, 1800.

THE JEW—*R. Cumberland*. ROBINSON CRUSOE—*Byrne*.  
THE FIRST FLOOR—*Cobb*.

The part of *Sir Stephen Bertram* by Mr. Powell, his first appearance in that character. The dignified manner and

M m a

habits

habits of this gentleman render him an apt and qualified successor to that particular cast and line of acting, vacant by Mr. Aicken's secession from the stage. He combines feeling with judgment, and seldom, if ever, errs in his conception of the character he personates.

In the Farce, Mr. Dowton personated *Whimsey*, for the first time, and with much address.

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### COVENT-GARDEN, WEDNESDAY, Nov. 12, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—*Cobb.*

The Royal Family visited the Theatre this evening, on which occasion the following song, commemorative of the famous *Battle of the Nile*, was introduced between the Play and Entertainment, in compliment to Lord Nelson's return to England. The ready pen of Mr. T. Dibdin furnished the words, which Munden gave with a degree of humour irresistibly comic, and peculiarly his own.

“ At my ditty, I'm certain, all Britons will smile,  
For it tells of a Hero, return'd from the Nile,  
Where, like Marlbro' so cruel, ('tis sung by old wives)  
He beat those who had never beat him in their lives.

“ In Toulon long time Monsieur chose to be,  
Tho' he ne'er stays in port, but when we're out at sea;  
Then swears we sha'n't beat him, and swears very right,  
For his way to prevent it is—never to fight.

“ At Malta they touch'd, and they took it—Good lack!  
Just to give us the trouble of taking it back!  
Little thinking the prelude it prov'd to their losses,  
And that Malta to them would produce only crosses.

“ At



“ At Aboukir they haul'd up so close to the strand,  
They swore Nelson should ne'er get 'twixt them and the land.  
Says the Tar, ‘ 'Tis not manners to give you the lie;  
‘ It may be I can't—but, by Jingo! I'll try.’

“ After toil, danger, conquest, and glory, you view  
The Hero return'd who succeeded for you.  
What lustre your smiles on the Tar must reflect,  
Who a country like this could defend and protect!

“ May peace be the end of the strife we maintain,  
For our freedom, our King, and our right to the main!  
We're content to shake hands—if they won't—why, what then?  
We must send out brave Nelson to thrash them again!”

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### DRURY-LANE, THURSDAY, Nov. 13, 1800.

THE GRECIAN DAUGHTER—*A. Murphy*. THE CO-  
ZENERS—*S. Foote*. ROBINSON CRUSOE—*Byrne*.

The main interest of this play, in the representation, rests with Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Powell, both of whom displayed their talents to the greatest advantage, in their respective characters of *Evander* and *Euphrasia*. Mrs. Powell's performance, in particular, is marked by *strong feeling*, she acts from the impulse of the soul: hence her acting constitutes a striking contrast to the studied and monotonous manner of Mrs. Siddons, who is, literally speaking, *the same*, in every character and situation.

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### COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY, Nov. 13, 1800.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE—*Shakspeare*. LOVE  
A-LA-MODE—*C. Macklin*.

Mr. Cooke appeared this evening in a new character, as the representative of *Sir Archy Macsarcasm* in the farce.  
Reserving

Reserving our report of his performance to the general retrospect we have on former occasions alluded to, we shall briefly observe, that the piece was uncommonly well cast. Mr. Johnstone's merit, in *Irish* characters, is too well known, and too generally allowed, to stand in need of panegyric. His *Sir Callaghan O' Brallaghen* was spritedly pourtrayed. Mr. Lewis personated *Squire Groom* with his customary vivacity; and *Beau Mordecai* afforded Mr. Simmons ample scope for a display of his powers in scenes of humour and comic force. There is only *one* female character, and that a very tame one, to wit, *Charlotte*: of course, Miss Lascelles, who performed that part, could not be expected to appear to much advantage.

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DRURY-LANE, FRIDAY, Nov. 14, 1800.

SIEGE OF BELGRADE—*Cobb*. THE OLD MAID—*A. Murphy*. ROBINSON CRUSOE—*Byrne*.

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COVENT-GARDEN, FRIDAY, Nov. 14, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds*. THE SPOIL'D CHILD—*Mrs. Jordan*.  
THE MOUTH OF THE NILE—*T. Dibdin*.

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DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, Nov. 15, 1800.

HAMLET—*Shakspeare*. OF AGE TO-MORROW.

Mr. Kemble's *Hamlet* ranks, beyond controversy, among the most finished pieces of acting the stage can boast. As a *performer*, this gentleman's reputation rests on a foundation the most solid and established. It were only to be wished, that in his *managerial* capacity he would *practise* the counsel he himself gives to *Polonius*, respecting his *treatment*, of *the actors*, whom he commands that lord to use "not strictly according to their deserts, but *much better*!" Well, indeed,



indeed, may we add, from the impulse of conscience, "*Use every man, according to his deserts, and who shall escape whipping?*"

## COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, Nov. 15, 1800.

LIFE—*J. Reynolds.* IL BONDOCANI—*T. Dibdin.*

IL BONDOCANI, a musical drama, in three acts, founded on a story in the *New Arabian Tales*, was performed this evening, for the first time, and with a degree of success commensurate to the splendour and magnificence with which it was got up. It is the production of Mr. T. Dibdin, who, we understand, presented it to the manager as far back as the year 1795: but from a variety of circumstances, the piece was neglected, till the recent success of a French drama, bearing the same title, and founded on the same story, attracted the notice of the manager, and suggested the expediency of giving it a trial.

The plot of this drama varies but little, in *essentials*, from the tale on which it is built, which renders it superfluous to enter into a very detailed *analysis*.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Haroun Alraschid,</i>	Mr. Townsend.
<i>Chebib,</i>	Mr. Emery.
<i>Abdalla,</i>	Mr. Hill.
<i>Hassan,</i>	Mr. Farley.
<i>Hazeb,</i>	Mr. Whitfield.
<i>Mesrour,</i>	Mr. Blanchard.
<i>Cadi of Bagdad,</i>	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Coreb,</i>	Mr. Claremont.
<i>Officer,</i>	Mr. Atkins.
<i>Captain of the Guard,</i>	Mr. King.

*Viziers, Emirs, Agas, Soldiers, &c.*

<i>Camira,</i>	Miss Dixon.
<i>Darina,</i>	Mrs. Mills.

*Haroun*

*Haroun Alraschid*, the celebrated Caliph of Bagdad, in one of his rambles in quest of adventures, assumes the disguise of a wandering Arab; and, under the name of *Il Bondocani* (the secret of which is confided solely to his principal officers), pays his addresses to *Darina*, the daughter of *Chebib*, a merchant, who has met with severe reverses of fortune. During *Chebib*'s prosperity, *Hassan*, it appears, had aspired to the honour of *Darina*'s hand; but now that the father is involved in difficulties, the mercenary lover declares off, and cruelly adds insult to meanness. At this juncture it is, that *Il Bondocani* makes his appearance, and solicits for *Darina*. But *Chebib*, mistaking the *Caliph* for a robber, rejects his alliance; till the former proposes to pay down immediately a large dower for his daughter, and to sign the contract before the *Cadi*. The homage paid by that officer, and other persons in power, to *Il Bondocani*, impresses *Chebib* with a more favourable opinion of his character, and he at length gives his consent to the Arab's union with his daughter.

Subordinate to the main story is the under-plot of *Camira*'s confinement, in consequence of her having admitted a nocturnal visit from a stranger, who, on the alarm being given, had the good fortune to escape the vigilance of the guards. *Camira* is beloved by *Abdalla*, son to *Chebib*, who having in vain ranged the country in quest of his mistress, grows weary of life. In this state of mind, he hears a reward proclaimed to whoever would discover the name of the person who invaded the haram. To release his father from *Hassan*'s gripe, to whom *Chebib* is indebted in a considerable sum of money, *Abdalla* announces himself as the culprit, and is instantly arrested by the *Caliph*'s guards.

*Camira* is visited in her dungeon by the *Caliph*, who solemnly engages to pardon her, provided she discovers who it



it was that visited her. *Camira* asserts the stranger to have been her own father; which apparent falsehood so enrages the *Caliph*, that, after confronting her with *Abdalla*, he orders her immediate execution. At this critical juncture, another prisoner is brought in, on the same charge, who avows himself to be *Hazeb*, father to *Camira*, formerly a sworn enemy to the *Caliph*, having taken up arms against him. A general explanation ensues—the *Caliph* pardons *Hazeb*; gives *Camira* in marriage to *Abdalla*; and himself espouses *Darina*.

The scenery to this drama is remarkably splendid and magnificent: a view of the famous city of Bagdad, in particular, is executed in the highest style of grandeur. Nor have less attention and expence been bestowed on the dresses and decorations, which may vie with the most costly of our theatrical exhibitions. In brief, the Managers have acted upon the broadest principle of liberality, and are in every sense deserving of the patronage they experience from the public.

Mr. Townsend, who represented *Il Bondocani*, possesses considerable merit, as a general performer; but his proportions are *too broad* to exhibit that symmetry of figure which the eye of taste looks for in a character so nearly approximating to *nudity*, as the disguise in which the *Caliph* makes his appearance, as a wandering Arab. Mr. Emery was very successful in his depicture of the blunt, honest, downright *Chebib*. But the most prominent personage in the drama was Mr. Fawcett's *Cadi*, a part which, in that gentleman's hands, proved irresistibly ludicrous, though the character itself, with respect to *propriety*, and *just delineation of manners*, is, perhaps, the most faulty in the whole groupe; the manners being, as the \*critic of the *Morning Post* very justly observes, *European*.

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\* We have frequently had occasion to applaud the *critiques* of this writer, who, to judge from his theatrical reports, possesses a rich fund of genuine wit, acumen, and quickness of apprehension, blended with a

*ropean*, instead of *Oriental*. The *Cadi* bears a greater resemblance to an English pettifogging lawyer, than to an Ottoman judge. Yet this is the very identical character which the *Times* extols in preference to all the rest! The part, it seems, was originally intended for Mr. Munden; but that performer conceiving it *beneath* him, Mr. Fawcett very kindly took it upon himself, and to his exertions the author is eminently indebted.

Mrs. Mills, as *Durina*, obtained great applause by the sprightliness of her manner. Miss Dixon appears to have little notion of *acting*; she sings well, but is totally inanimate. Miss Waters would have been a better representative of *Camira*.

In the musical department, Messrs. Athwood and Moorehead never exerted their talents to greater advantage. The overture contains many grand passages, and the airs are distinguished by simplicity and sweetness of modulation. Townsend's *bravura*, in the second act, is a masterly composition.

We subjoin a specimen of the songs, which, in the aggregate, display more poetical genius than we have of late been accustomed to witness in theatrical productions.

SONG—*Abdalla*.

HAIL! Solitude, thou friend to woe;  
 Appeaser of my bosom's grief!  
 With freedom here the tear may flow,  
 'Tis here alone I find relief.

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suavity of manners, and modesty of deportment, seldom to be met with in one and the self-same person. With an infinitely greater portion of talent, he is, perhaps, less known, in the theatrical circle, than any other writer of dramatic criticisms for the newspapers.

And



And yet, alas! I seek in vain  
 The object of my fond desires;  
 Nor solitude can soothe the pain  
 Thy absence, Selima, inspires.

SONG—*Darina.*

STRANGER, think me not too bold,  
 Judge with candour of my youth;  
 Ere this \*curtain I unfold,  
 Listen to a simple truth.

The heart alone is worth a thought,  
 Features boast no real worth;  
 Beauty may be bought or sold,  
 But merit in the mind has birth.

Yet think not, stranger, I would say  
 Mine are features form'd to please;  
 I haste to chase the thought away,  
 By simply showing such as these.

BRAVURA—*Caliph.*

THUS, when the mariner, inclin'd to sleep,  
 On a deceitful calm relies,  
 Sudden the awful thunder roars,  
 Sudden the forked lightning flies,  
 And the loud storm appals the distant shores.  
 Whirlwinds and cataracts unite  
 To fill the wretch with dire affright,  
 And wanton o'er the bosom of the deep.

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\* Pointing to her veil.

Or, when the Indian, careless of his foes,  
 Marches secure beneath the forest's shade,  
 Too soon the adverse shout he knows;  
 In vain he mixes in the strife,  
 Though dear the warrior sells his life,  
 He falls, and dyes with gore the hostile blade.

SONG—*Cadi.*

MUSTAPHA Beg was fond of war,  
 Cling, clang, cymbals jangle;  
 He took me out to camps so far,  
 March! fal de ral, de ral la!  
 Mustapha Beg  
 Lost an eye and a leg,  
 And died on the field for the love of glory;  
 Whilst I from the fray,  
 With my gold ran away,  
 And I'm glad I'm alive to relate the story.  
 Fal de ral, fal de ral, so much for glory.

War, wine, women, I give up,  
 Cling, clang, all confusion,  
 For drum, or gun, or sparkling cup,  
 That, (*snapping his fingers*) fal de ral, de ra:  
 Though I've lost my place,  
 Pray where's the disgrace?  
 I've *that* in my coffers shall cease all repining,  
 I may crack my jokes,  
 Like other great folks,  
 And when fairly kick'd out, call it only *resigning*.  
 Fal de ral, &c.

The house overflowed in every part. *Il Bondocani* was received with general applause, and announced for repetition amidst the general acclamations of the audience.

GENERAL



## GENERAL RETROSPECT

OF THE

## PERFORMANCES OF MR. COOKE.

DOUBTLESS many of our readers have felt disappointed in consequence of our not entering upon a general review of this gentleman's professional merit in our former Number. But the majority, we trust, will hold us justified in declining to give a precipitate opinion of the talents of an actor, the outset of whose career has been marked with a degree of interest and *éclat*, to which the annals of the stage can exhibit very few parallels. Unwilling to be blindly borne along with the tide of popular opinion, on the one hand, and equally reluctant *wantonly* to oppose the prevailing bias, on the other; we have patiently waited till reflection and experience might enable us to form a competent judgment, and return a righteous verdict, the result of sober and mature deliberation.

When an actor of superior talents and high-raised expectations makes his *début* on the stage, it generally happens, as in all other cases out of the ordinary tract, that the public are divided into two parties, each equally violent, and equally in extremes, though on opposite sides. Under such circumstances, an intelligent critic will proceed with caution; will weigh, ponder, and reflect; and re-judge his own opinion, before he ventures finally to decide. He will leave it to the supercilious, the superficial, and the hasty, to obey the dictates of momentary impulse, the undigested suggestions of prejudice and caprice.

Two months have now elapsed since Mr. Cooke made his professional *début* on the boards of Covent-Garden theatre.

During

During that period, he has appeared in no less than six different characters, viz. 1. *Richard*, in *King Richard III.* (Oct. 31.)—2. *Shylock*, in *The Merchant of Venice* (Nov. 10.)—3. *Sir Archy Macsarcasm*, in *Love à-la-Mode* (Nov. 14.)—\*4. *Iago*, in *Othello, or the Moor of Venice* (Nov. 28.)—5. *Macbeth*, in Shakspeare's tragedy of that name (Dec. 5.) And, 6. *Kitely*, in *Every Man in his Humour* (Dec. 17.) Such a diversity of characters, all of them of first-rate consequence, of itself evinces (supposing even the several parts individually to be but tolerably sustained) a versatility of talent above the ordinary scale of intellect. But when we add, that among the whole list there was not one which Mr. Cooke did not fill in a very respectable manner, his claim to the title of a superior performer cannot be called in question.

Granting, then, this general proposition, we conceive it to be no derogation from the *aggregate* of his professional excellence, when we observe, that, though on the *comprehensive* scale of his diversified talents, he stands nearly unrivalled; yet that in some of the characters, in which he has appeared, he is equalled and surpassed by certain of his co-temporaries. To this class we refer his *Richard* and *Shylock*, which, in our humble opinion, meet with a superior representative in the person of Mr. Kemble. His *Macbeth*, likewise, appears to us deficient in force.

That Mr. Cooke is endowed with great capacities from Nature, no candid and intelligent critic will presume to controvert. He is indisputably formed for the higher walks of dramatic excellence. Vigorous and just conception, origi-

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\* The three latter characters, owing to the unavoidable necessity we are under of postponing a great part of our *regular routine* of matter, we have not noticed in our *Theatrical Report*, but we have nevertheless judged it expedient to incorporate them with our present *Retrospect* of Mr. Cooke's performances.



nality of thought—a mind classical, cultivated, and refined—added to an attentive observance, and apt personification, of the manners of actual life, constitute the characteristics of his performance. Hence he may with truth be said to possess the leading requisites, the essential qualifications, of a great actor. But then, as a kind of drawback upon his powerful talents, he labours under certain physical disadvantages, which impartial criticism cannot fail to notice. His voice, indeed, is strong, articulate, and distinct—but at the same time inharmonious, harsh, and occasionally even *grating*. This defect is rendered still more striking, by a peculiarity he has of *chopping his words*, if we may be allowed the phrase—we allude to a kind of *te—tum—te—ti* enunciation, into which he is continually giving. To illustrate our meaning by example, in the soliloquy in *Othello*, where *Iago* proposes to poison the *Moor's* mind against his wife, Mr. Cooke gives the passage thus, with a continual break, or pause, at every second syllable, setting out with a kind of half-foot; e. g.

“Tri—fles light—as air—

“Are to—the jēa—lous cōn—firmā—tion strōng,” &c.

And this species of accent he falls into almost on every occasion, when he aims at giving particular weight and cogency to his words.

In *manner*, likewise, Mr. Cooke has some very unpleasant peculiarities. That constant *see-saw* which he affects whenever he appears to muse, disgusts, as well from its being *overcharged*, as from its frequent recurrence. A *sameness* likewise pervades the rest of his action on these occasions—his arms always move in a semicircular direction—his look always fixes on the ground—and he treads the stage to the same measure, and the same distances. In brief, he wants *grace*, and that dignity of deportment, which we discover,

and

and with which we are so much charmed, in the acting of Mr. Kemble.

But if Mr. Kemble has the advantage of Mr. Cooke in the *serious* walks of the drama, in the *gayer* scenes of comedy Mr. Cooke leaves his competitors at a hopeless and immeasurable distance. His very features seem expressly formed by Nature to excel in the *sarcastic*—a line in which he appears to us to stand without a single rival. In proof of this assertion, we need only advert to his inimitable performance of *Sir Archy Macsarcasm*, in *Love à-la-Mode*. In this character, every look, every varied inflexion of feature, every motion, constituted an illustration of the part. If ever the proud epithet of perfection might be applied to human effort, it is on occasions like this. The effect—as, in such cases, it ever must be—was irresistible; nor has Macklin more successfully depicted the vain, sarcastic, supercilious, overbearing, yet mean, cringing, abject, and fawning Scotchman, with his pen, than Mr. Cooke did by his matchless style of acting. It is in characters of this description, in our humble opinion, that Mr. Cooke's talents are best qualified to succeed. His *Kitely*, likewise, affords corroborative proof that *Thalia* claims him as her own.

Upon the whole, then, upon a dispassionate review of Mr. Cooke's pretensions, we may justly pronounce him an acquisition of the first importance to the Metropolitan Stage—and most cordially do we congratulate the Proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre on their good fortune in having engaged the services of a performer, whose talents, we may safely enture to predict, will prove to them a source of permanent advantage and emolument.

LETTER



## LETTER

TO

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, ESQ.

ON THE CONDUCT AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE NEW MANAGER  
OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE.

No. II.

*By the Editor of the Dramatic Censor.*

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Is it *Peace*?What hast THOU to do with *Peace*?—turn thee behind me.—There is *no peace* to the WICKED!

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SIR,

JUDGING from the evidence of facts, reasoning from analogy, and appreciating the *future* by the *past*, I was naturally led to conclude, that the man who can injure others *unprovoked*, would not be slow to seek revenge for bold and actual aggression; though such aggression be the immediate result of his own misconduct and delinquency. Accordingly I looked forward to open war, to the hostile movements of malice and resentment, on the part of the Manager, and, as I expressly declared myself in my former Letter, was “*prepared for extremities! prepared to meet his vengeance in every form and shape!*” But the resistance I expected was that of a *bold*, however *perverted* mind—the attack I anticipated that of a *daring*, however *guilty*, foe! Criminal as I thought him, I held him superior to meanness: Tyrannical and unfeeling as I had found him, I still acquitted him of littleness, of base and

VOL. III.                      O o                      cowardly.

cowardly revenge. Even in his anger, I looked for some traces of magnanimity---even in his fury, for manliness and pride.

In this hope I was the more confirmed from certain occurrences which took place previous to the publication of the last Number of the *DRAMATIC CENSOR*. No sooner had I made known my determination to impeach the Manager, than I received intimation, *through a certain channel*, that the exposure I meditated was a work of danger; that I should draw down ruin upon my devoted head; that the antagonist, with whom I prepared to enter the lists, was not to be attacked with impunity,—that he was a *man of war*,—a second “*fighting Bob!*” A most flowery description was given me of the campaigns he had fought! the laurels he had won! Tropes and metaphors were dealt out with a profuse and lavish hand. I was told, how undauntedly he stood the brunt of A——n’s fire!—with what coolness and intrepidity he snuffed into up his nostrils the smoke, and eke the ball of D——’s pistol!—and once upon a time warmed his *proboscis* at the muzzle of a nine-pounder!--Nay, even his *Bow-street* exploits were pressed into the service; the battles of intoxication were fought thrice over; and the narrator, to give the greater effect to his tale of marvel, with a flourish of his hand circumscribed the entire dimensions of the room, to impress me with a fuller idea of the force and prowess with which this mighty *Bobadilean* hero “strewed the plain with mountains of the dead!”

Such were the precise words, in which his ’squire and armour-bearer described the vast *Herculean* feat! and, surely, the risque of such an encounter might well appal a man of more than ordinary strength of nerve. But conscious that I was warring in the cause of justice, I felt myself buoyed up with courage to dare this haughty *Philistine!* and catching from |  
his



his *marvel-monger* 'squire the contagion of *rhodomontade*, I replied in a kind of *extempore* paraphrase of a well-known passage in Horace\*.

A soul I boast which Fear could ne'er enthrall;  
Nor Fate subdue; nor Jove himself appal!  
And shall this \*\*\*\* strike the man with dread,  
Who dares heaven's thunder bursting o'er his head?

In brief, I repeated my determination to bring the Manager before the tribunal of the public, whatever might be the ultimate event with respect to myself.

What I promised, I performed. The fulness of time being come, my Publication made its appearance, and due care was taken, that the Manager should not be long in want of a copy. He read it, and he felt its force; for conscience was busily at work within him. Nor was his revenge tardy, though certainly of a nature very different from that, which I had been led to expect. His malice, as in the case of Mr. Archer, *overshot its mark*! Instead of obtaining, he defeated, his own object; and, by a deed at once rash, cowardly, and self-eversive, he entailed upon himself all the infamy of meanness, without reaping the advantage he sought; at the same time that he put weapons into my hands to wound and gall him,, were I so disposed, still deeper.

It is not my intention to take up this business on personal grounds. Though it relates immediately to myself, I purpose

\* Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus :  
Si fractus illabatur orbis,  
Impavidum ferient ruinæ,

HOR. Lib. III. Od. 3.

—nec tremendo  
Jupiter ipse ruens tumultu.

HOR. Lib. I. Od. 16.

to discuss it merely with reference to its *public* tendency. *Individual* resentment against Mr. K. I harbour none—nor shall *private* feelings ever be suffered, on my part, to interfere with his *public* claims. Where he is deserving of praise—and to that, as an *actor* of superlative talents and endowments, he is most eminently entitled, whatever may be his faults, as *manager*—I shall ever be among the foremost to award it—nor could he himself feel happier than I should do, were it in my power, to award him praise, unmixed, unmingled, unalloyed with censure, on *all* occasions, and in *every* capacity.

But to return from this digression. 'Tis the practice of the theatres to give cards of *free admission* to persons who are in the habit of publishing *critiques* on the stage. These admissions are considered merely in the light of a compliment paid by the proprietors of the theatre, to men of literary talents and pursuits; not as a *douceur* or *bribe*, to suborn a favourable report of the performances. Such, at least, *ought* to be the footing, on which they are reciprocally given and received—such, at least, has been the footing on which the Editor of the DRAMATIC CENSOR has condescended to accept of them. But what opinion must the public form of their actual tenure, when they find, that the moment a man dares to speak his *real* sentiments; the moment a writer dares to expose abuse, and reprobate the misconduct of the Manager; the moment he ceases to abet injustice and oppression, that moment his *free-admission* is annulled; that moment he is proscribed the *privileged order*? Such has been the *magnanimous* system of revenge pursued by the present *magnanimous* Manager of Drury-Lane Theatre, towards the Editor of the DRAMATIC CENSOR; such his cowardly treatment of a man, whose\* favour he has been proud to court, and whose

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\* It is not my wish to enlarge on topics, which immediately involve myself, else I might observe, in aggravation of the Manager's ingratitude,



whose writings, in support of that legitimate authority which a Manager ought to possess (at a period when a theatrical revolt menaced the general subversion of rule and subordination) have in a great measure tended to establish him in that power he now so flagrantly abuses.

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tude, that as long as I continued to speak in his praise, which I uniformly did, and still uniformly shall do, whilst the discussion merely respects his qualifications, as an *actor*, without any reference to his *managerial* capacity; so long was he profuse towards me in his expressions of acknowledgment and esteem. Conceiving him to stand at the head of the theatrical profession, I paid him the compliment to dedicate to him the First Volume of the DRAMATIC CENSOR, on which occasion he wrote me the following letter of thanks:

“ SIR,

“ There can be nothing more gratifying to an artist, than to find the exertion of his abilities, such as they are, rewarded by the notice of men of talents and genius. You have done me a great honour, Sir; and though I am conscious how little I deserve so flattering a distinction, as to have any production of your's addressed to me—yet your approbation of my application to an arduous profession, and of the pains which I take to improve myself in it, will at least have the good effect of making my studies cheerful, and stimulating my perseverance.

“ I am, Sir,

“ April 14, 1800.

“ Your most obliged and obedient servant,

“ Great Russel-street, Bloomsbury-square.

“ J. P. KEMBLE.”

Such were, at that time, the Manager's sentiments towards myself; and no wonder! for at that time I was in the habit of applauding him. But how totally altered in this case! The moment I assume a different tone! As the Devil remarked of Job, “Doth he fear God, *for nought*? Hast thou not blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased? But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will *curse* thee to thy face!” such exactly is the treatment I have experienced from Mr. Kemble! Such the gratitude of the new Manager! But I will urge this theme no further. 'Twas a deed of rashness, done under the momentary impulse of passion, and as such I pardon it.

Is

I not the resumption of a *free-admission* card, under such circumstances, a plain proof, that independence of mind and of action, is totally incompatible with any connection with Managers? Does it not forcibly demonstrate, that little or no reliance can be placed in our public vehicles of theatrical criticism; since, it is evident, that they too would be obnoxious to the same treatment, were they to act with equal integrity? Can we longer wonder at the fulsome panegyrics lavished in the public prints on certain leading characters?—wonder at the servile homage paid to Mrs. S——, or the equally disgraceful obsequiousness, with which these panders of the town worship the magnanimous *autocrat* himself?

Yet, cowardly as was this act, some apology might be made for the Manager, were it not equally as *futile*, as it is *base*. Men of superior minds, indeed, would not *stoop to meanness*, were they even certain of accomplishing their point. But what a pitiful and groveling soul does it argue, when men descend to worthlessness, from which they reap no other fruit but infamy!—when they follow vileness, as philosophers tell us we should virtue, “*for its own reward!*” Had it been in the Manager’s power, by proscribing me the *free list*, to *shut the doors* of the theatre against me; though I must have despised, I might have admitted his motive in extenuation of his conduct. Had it been in his power, by *rescinding my privilege*, to *crush my publication*, I might have exculpated him on the score of prudence and precaution. But neither of these objects is he competent to obtain, and I can only deride and laugh to scorn his mean, paltry, cowardly, dirty, and abortive malice. He has furnished me with proofs irrefragable of his pusillanimous disposition, which, were my soul as weak and mean-spirited as his own, I might easily avail myself of, to harass him beyond endurance.

Arguments,



Arguments, bottomed on the principle of *force*, and *bold resistance* having failed in deterring me from *engaging* in the war, recourse was had to another system of opposition, to prevent the *renewal* and *continuance* of hostilities. The *scare-crow* of law was now set up, and hung, *in terrorem*, over my head. I was told, that I should involve myself in ruin inevitable and irretrievable, if I dared to proceed—that I stood in serious danger—that a sage, learned in the law, and brought up at the footstool of *Gamaliel*, had sifted my last Number to the *very bran*, (the *Coarse Flour Bill* not having then passed) and that after a most rigorous scrutiny, he had found no less than *twenty bouncing libels* in the composition! I was therefore *kindly* advised, for my *own sake*, to drop the affair. The horrors of a prison were depicted to me in most glaring colours. Sterne's *captive* is a mere *bagatelle* placed in comparison with the scene presented to my view on this occasion.

I replied, that acting, as I did, from upright motives, I saw no danger, in this land of liberty, from a virtuous resistance of wrong—that I had the approval of my own heart, and certainly should proceed to expose mal-practice, wherever, and whenever, I met with it—that as to the sage Disciple of *Gamaliel*, who had taken so much pains in *analyzing* my production, his *sieve* must have been of a very *coarse* texture; as a friend, learned in the law, like himself, had assured me, that, instead of *twenty*, there were *three-and-twenty libels and a half* in my last Number!—if by the term *libel*, I was to understand *truths* that come home to a man's feelings, and gall him, because his conscience makes the application.

On these principles I am determined to proceed. Truth is the rock on which I stand. As long as I continue to exercise the function of a DRAMATIC CENSOR, I shall not fail to expose and reprobate injustice and oppression. 'Tis not the managerial

managerial *office*, but the *abuse* of that office, I attack. For Mr. Kemble, *individually*, I entertain the sincerest good-will—and should an opportunity offer of befriending him, he will find, that his conduct towards me *has* not, *cannot* beget in my mind a sentiment of *personal* rancour and animosity. I only wish to see him *uniform*—great *behind*, as well as *before* the curtain—Exalted as he is in talents and capacity, I wish to see him superior to littleness—superior to paltry envy, and the mean wiles of common souls.

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N. B. It was the Writer's intention to have concluded in this Number his Exposition of Mr. Archer's Case; but the length to which this Letter already extends, renders it necessary to postpone that discussion, with certain other topics of animadversions which have subsequently started up, to a future opportunity.

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The Letter from the *Chapter Coffee House* will meet with due attention.

The *Title Page*, *Index*, &c. to the Third Volume, will be given in our next.

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END OF VOL. III.

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